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TAGS: [PHUM](#) [ELAB](#) [PREL](#) [CB](#) [KWMN](#)

SUBJECT: NGOS APPROVE OF CAMBODIA'S TIER UPGRADE ON  
TRAFFICKING

REF: A. SECSTATE 85578

[1](#)B. SECSTATE 89018

[1](#)C. PHNOM PENH 1092

[1](#)D. PHNOM PENH 1134

[1](#)1. (SBU) Summary. Anti-trafficking NGOs applauded the decision to upgrade Cambodia to Tier 2 Watch List, based on the Cambodia's performance last year. However, AFESIP and IJM believe that cooperation so far this year has not matched last year's efforts. Mission officers are stressing in their contacts with Cambodian officials the importance of sustained efforts to combat trafficking in coming months lest Cambodia fall back to Tier 3 in next year's rankings. End Summary.

[1](#)2. (SBU) AFESIP's Mam Somaly expressed pleasure with Cambodia's upgrade to Tier 2 Watch List in a recent conversation with Poloff. She said the top levels of the police are committed to fighting TIP, but she said she was not so certain that lower levels of the police shared this commitment. She also noted the increasing sophistication of trafficking in Phnom Penh and expressed concern that there was not the same level of cooperation with provincial police as existed in Phnom Penh. She singled out the small town of Kamrieng, between Battambang and the Thai border, as a new site that warranted close monitoring.

[1](#)3. (SBU) An International Justice Mission (IJM) representative told Poloff that he believed that Cambodia's Tier 2 upgrade was warranted given the good cooperation last year. However, IJM emphasized that the police have been less helpful this year. IJM recommended that the approval process for operations by General Ung Sokunthea's MOI Anti-trafficking unit be streamlined. Currently, it took two weeks to gain approval for operations, whereas it took only two days last year. IJM said it had planned to shut down a group of brothels with allegedly underage children in Phnom Penh's Street 63 within a period of one month, but the police halted the operation after one brothel was shut down. However, IJM described good cooperation in the provinces - Battambang, Siem Riep and Sihanoukville - where it has conducted police training for anti-TIP activities. Unlike AFESIP, IJM believed that investigations in the provinces were more expensive, but not less efficient.

[1](#)4. (SBU) World Vision's Director Bill Forbes commented that he believed the Tier 2 Watch List was the proper designation for Cambodia. One-off events like the Chai Hour II raid should not be the sole factor in determining Cambodia's ranking, he commented. However, Forbes wanted to see the Chief of the Anti-Trafficking Department increase its operations. Forbes complained that the Ministry of Social Affairs, Veterans and Youth (MOSAVY) does not have adequate capacity to monitor the well-being of rescued girls. He also

recommended better coordination between MOSAVY and the Ministry of Interior, as well as between the Ministries of Interior and Justice. Forbes expressed concern about other forms of human trafficking apart from trafficking for sexual purposes, noting that he would like to raise awareness of safe migration and other forms of TIP. He lauded the fact that the TIP Report is beginning to highlight the issue of forced labor.

15. (SBU) HAGAR's Talmage Payne agreed with other NGO leaders on the Tier 2 Watch List designation of Cambodia. He said that Cambodia has made commendable improvement in its anti-TIP efforts, though he believed the effort was largely a by-product of donor pressure rather than arising from genuine commitment on the part of the government. He said that he would like to see a government managed accreditation system for shelters and better NGO oversight of the shelters. Like World Vision, Payne believed labor trafficking was an important issue that will become a challenge for Cambodia. He sees a need to monitor labor recruiting agencies.

16. (SBU) Comment: All of the NGOs that we contacted appeared to be genuinely pleased with Cambodia's upgrade to Tier 2 Watch List status, but all were less enthusiastic about Cambodia's progress on TIP issues this year. Mission officials, including the Ambassador, have stressed in their contacts with the RGC that it cannot rest on its laurels, that it must make a concerted and sustained effort over the coming months to ensure that Cambodia does not fall back again into Tier 3.

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